



Tops other N.J. cities

The U.S. Housing and Urban Development has certified that the Jersey City Housing Authority has notched 99% in its annual SEMAP (Section 8 Management Assessment Program) performance rating.

As the JCHA's first score certified under the Obama administration, it is the highest score in the agency's history and the highest 2009 score among large municipal public housing authorities in New Jersey.

The Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) measures the performance of public housing agencies that administer the housing choice voucher program in 14 key areas. Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy said, "I am pleased to see the Housing Authority diligently follows up on inspections to ensure their landlords' compliance with Housing Quality Standards. I am also proud that in keeping with my policy of making quality affordable housing available to our residents, the JCHA maximizes the use of federally funded vouchers. I congratulate Chairman Mukherji, Ms. Maio, the board and staff on this great achievement."

JCHA Commissioner and Chairman Raj Mukherji credited the staff, noting the Authority's strict oversight of its Section 8 program. "While numerical proof of our success is great for troop morale, this comes as no surprise considering the steps we have taken to ensure a 'High Performer' rating." "Our oversight procedures ensure the prompt correction by landlords and tenants of housing quality deficiencies," Mukherji said in citing reasons for the Authority's SEMAP success.

"Considering that the supply just can't keep up with the ever-increasing demand for affordable housing, we make sure that our housing choice vouchers are put to use quickly - which in turn makes us competitive for more vouchers. And we have been aggressive with project-based vouchers."

Here are recent Section 8 Management Assessment Program scores, provided by the Jersey City Housing Authority, for other large NJ municipal housing authorities, as certified by HUD:

Newark - 3/31/09 - 62%

Paterson - 3/31/09 - 70%

Paterson DCD - 6/30/08 - 33%

Elizabeth - 6/30/08 - 86%

Lakewood RAP - 12/31/08 - 93%

Camden - 12/31/08 - 86%

Maria Maio, Executive Director of the Housing Authority, added, "I commend our Section 8 staff for their hard work and dedication. From the family self-sufficiency program to our methodologies for determining rent, we will continue to do more with less and strive for excellence within SEMAP and with everything else we do."

Large municipal public housing authorities are being considered as those with at least 1,000

Section 8 vouchers in their inventory.

HUD Newark Field Office Director Diane Johnson said, "We congratulate the Jersey City Housing Authority on its outstanding administration of the Section 8 program. Under the leadership of the Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director, the Housing Authority continues to provide excellent assistance to those households in the City of Jersey City. Keep up the good work."

The Jersey City Housing Authority is the state's second largest public housing authority, with over 15,000 residents and responsibility for the administration of over 6,000 housing units, including 3,466 Section 8 units and 2,467 public housing units.

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